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Philos-Patria, pseud.
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LETTER

TO

HENRY FIELDING, *Esq;*

Occasioned by his

Enquiry into the Causes of the late Increase
of ROBBERS, &c.



L O N D O N :

Printed for M. COOPER, in *Pater-noster Row*.





A
L E T T E R
T O

Henry Fielding, Esq;

S I R,

THE PUBLIC is highly obliged to
you for your excellent Discourse,
entitled, ' An Enquiry into the Causes of
' the late Increase of Robbers, &c.

For

For though the Proposals which you have offered for remedying this growing Evil, do not, I think, 'Trace the Evil from the 'very Fountain-head, and shew whence it 'originally springs;' yet, if carried into Execution, they might probably not a little contribute to reduce the Evil within some Bounds.

Men would never give themselves up to a continued Course of Robbery, if it were not for the indulging themselves in some Vice, to which they have by Nature the strongest Temptation; when they are almost sure, sooner or later, to suffer Death, or to be transported.

Certain it is, that no Man betook himself to this Course of Life, either for the
fake



fake of partaking in some public Diversion, or of getting drunk, or to enable him to set up for a Gamester.

Every Robber, at least the most notorious, has some farther View in getting Money, by that way of Life, which is evidently this, — to spend it in *Debauchery*.

At the Time, when the late unhappy Mr. *Maclain* was apprehended, an infamous Woman was found at his Lodging. And though the poor low Rogue cannot pretend to keep a Mistress, yet he has no sooner got a little Money, but he resorts to those Houses, which are frequented by lewd Women ; and when the little he has collected is lavished away upon these wretched Creatures, he is encouraged and hardned by them to go out, and get more in the same way.

This

This is so undeniably the Truth of the Case, the very Fountain-head, whence Robbery originally springs; that I am not a little surprized, you should not have added one Section more, *how to suppress Debauchery among the lower kind of People*; which can only be done, either by clearing the Town, in some measure, of these infamous Women, or obliging them to get their Living by some honest Labour or Calling.

I leave it to the Legislature to enact some Law, for the Discovery and Conviction of all such Women; and when they are convicted, let them be transported; this is the only Way to get rid of them.

Happy

Happy were it, if all Places of public Diversions were absolutely suppressed, but such only, as are licensed by Authority ; and that even these were put under some Regulations, and nothing suffered to be exhibited, that has any Tendency to corrupt the Morals of Men, or is a Dishonour to Christianity.

Happy were it, if no sort of Gaming were permitted, but at private Houses, and these only, where Masters or Mistresses do not make a Trade of it, and are Persons of Fashion, Reputation and Fortune ; or in such Company or Families, where it is practised only, as an innocent Amusement.

B

Your

Your Observations on the Laws relating to the Provision for the Poor, and to Vagabonds, are what highly deserve the Attention of the Legislature.

But these do not reach the Case of the notorious Robber ; — ‘ Of that great Gang
 ‘ of Rogues, (of which you make mention)
 ‘ whose Number falls little short of a Hundred, who are incorporated in one Body,
 ‘ have Officers and a Treasury, and have
 ‘ reduced Theft and Robbery into a regular
 ‘ System, and who appear in all Disguises,
 ‘ and mix in most Companies ; are versed
 ‘ in every Art of Cheating, Thieving, and
 ‘ Robbing ; and are armed with every Method of evading the Law, if they should
 ‘ ever be discovered, and an Attempt made
 ‘ to bring them to Justice’.

These

These Men cannot be included among the Number of the Poor, or of Vagabonds. These are the Men, whose Increase ought the most to be dreaded. And the only way to prevent their Increase, and wholly to extirpate them, is, to prevent Debauchery, to rid this great Metropolis of lewd and infamous Women; who most certainly are the Engines, that set them to Work, and for whose sake they hazard their Lives.

I allow, there are Difficulties in the apprehending of Felons, in the Prosecuting, and the Tryal of them, which ought to be removed; and that these Difficulties do give Encouragement to Robbery; as does likewise the Hope of their obtaining a Pardon.

But I cannot agree with you, ' That the
 ' Celerity, Privacy, and Solemnity of Exe-
 ' cutions would have such an Effect, as
 ' you imagine, to prevent Robbery ; or
 ' indeed that they would prevent or re-
 ' claim one Man from being a Robber.
 ' It must be owing to other Causes,
 ' than the solemn manner of executing
 ' Criminals, that Robberies are so rare in
 ' *Holland.*'

The Solemnity of Execution, if it were
 practised in this Country, no doubt, would
 strike a Terror into those Persons, that suffer
 Death : But wicked Men, who were not
 present at that Solemnity, when they were
 told of it, would only deride it.

There is one Thing, which well de-
 served your Notice, that gives great En-
 couragement

couragement to Robbery, and that is ; —
 The Account, which is given in the
 Sessions-Papers, and other Tracts, of the
 Behaviour of such as are executed. These
 Persons are represented, as dying *Penitent*,
 and consequently in a State of Salvation.
 We very rarely read of one Instance to the
 contrary.

Nay, some Writers, who have given an
 Account of the Behaviour of those unhappy
 Persons, have very rashly and injudiciously
 assured them ; — ‘ That their Case was
 ‘ exactly parallel to the Case of the Thief
 ‘ on the Cross, recorded in the Gospel ;’ —
 ‘ to which it bears not the least Similitude.

When other Robbers hear and read this,
 it greatly encourages them to continue
 their wicked Course of Life ; and there can
 be

be no doubt, they say within themselves ;---
 ‘ It is but to dye Penitent at last, and we
 ‘ shall be saved in the next Life.’

Upon the whole. Though there be many
 different Causes of Robbery, as evidently
 appears from your Book ; yet, if all these
 were removed, Robbery would still be car-
 ried on to a great Degree ; unless some
 effectual Law be enacted, and vigorously
 carried into Execution, to prevent *De-
 bauchery*.

I am,

SIR, &c.



PHILO-PATRIA.

